

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/525,125

Examiner

Maria Veronica D. Ewald

Applicant(s)

SNYDER ET AL.

Art Unit

1722

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 7/13/06.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-11.
3. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☐ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1 – 11 are allowed. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: Applicant has persuasively argued and identified the differences and deficiencies between the closest prior art references of Bedetti (U.S. 6,062,487) and Litvinov (SU 1777944 A1) and the claimed invention. Specifically, Bedetti teaches a bucket or container mounted on shaft (item 15 – figure 2), such that the liquid jets enter the first distributor (item 2 – figure 2), are dispersed through the first and subsequently, through the second distributor into the granulation or prill tower. However, **Bedetti does not teach that the bucket or container is mounted on the shaft, slidably in the axial direction and does not further teach that a device is directly associated with the bucket to make it vibrate in the axial direction.** With respect to the reference of Litvinov, Litvinov teaches a bucket mounted to a shaft (item 3 – figure 1), such that vibration is generated by a pneumatic cylinder (item 17 – figure 1); however, the vibration is generated to cause rotation of parts 11 – 13 and provide controlled vibration of parts 3 and 7, **such that the bucket vibrates horizontally, not axially. In addition, the bucket of Litvinov is not mounted in a sliding way in the axial direction on the shaft.**

In addition, Applicant's cited reference of Wakabayashi (JP 05154425) teaches that there is an exciter to vibrate the atomizing head (item 1 – abstract); however, **the atomizer head is not mounted on the driving shaft in a sliding way in the axial direction and such shaft is not revolvingly supported at the top of a prill tower.**

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Applicant's further cited reference of Kholin (U.S. 4,585,167) teach a similar bucket mounted at the top of a granulation tower but **does not teach that the bucket is mounted to the tower on the shaft in a sliding way in the axial direction and does not teach that there is a device directly associated with the bucket to make it vibrate in the axial direction.**

Thus, prior art fails to teach an apparatus for the granulation of a substance provided in fluid, semi-fluid and similar state comprising a prilling tower, a prilling bucket revolvingly supported inside and at the top of the tower, a driving shaft revolvingly supported at the top of said tower and extending in the axial direction thereof, said shaft having at least one end portion associated with said prilling bucket to command it into rotation, and a device to apply vibration to said bucket, characterized in that the bucket is mounted in a sliding way on said driving shaft in said axial direction and it is integral with it in rotation and in that said device is directly associated with said bucket to make it vibrate in said axial direction.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

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Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Maria Veronica D. Ewald whose telephone number is 571-272-8519. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 8 - 4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dr. Yogendra Gupta can be reached on 571-272-1316. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

MVE


JOSEPH S. DEL SOLE
PRIMARY EXAMINER
8/18/06